

Flynn, Eileen

From: Martinez, Cynthia <martinezc11@owls.southernct.edu>
Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2015 1:48 PM
To: HSTestimony
Subject: Bill No. 6860, For the record

Dear Human Services Committee,

My name is Cynthia Martinez and I am a current resident of Bridgeport Connecticut. I am a senior at Southern Connecticut State University where I am studying to be a social worker. Along with being a student, I intern at the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. I specialize in Young Adult Services. My clients mean the world to me, and although they suffer greatly from mental illnesses and an intensive history of trauma, they have potential to be exceptional members of the community! The kinds of mental illnesses present among my clients vary, but lately I have been getting referrals for young adults who have Autism Spectrum Disorder. As stated by The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) , there are "approximately 1 in 68 American children are on the autism spectrum. More specifically, it's estimated that 1 in 42 boys and 1 in 189 girls are diagnosed with autism in the US". As this modern disorder begins to grow, so do the children suffering from it. There is an ugly stigma among people who have mental, behavioral and developmental disorders. Once diagnosed, they are considered "unable" by society's standards. I am here to say that this ugly rumor! I have personally seen a people with on the autism spectrum, in my family and at my agency, achieve great successes. This success however, can only be achieved if the individual is given a chance.

The biggest concern among my clients is the need for financial support. We do our best to connect the clients with social services, but ultimately they want to work for their own money. Having the opportunity to work not only gives them a chance to become financially stable, but it also gives them a sense of self worth. While the agency has done a phenomenal job of hiring job coaches, most of my clients simply do not have the social skills necessary to attain a part- time job.

Bill No. 6860 emphasizes the importance of vocational training for young adults who have Autism Spectrum Disorder. If this bill is raised, it will give a plethora of young adults the opportunity to train properly and find work.

As an aspiring social worker, and concerned family member, I am urging the committee to pass this bill. The benefits to this bill will be evident socially and economically. Because of technical difficulties earlier in the week I was not able to hand in my testimony before the hearing, but I am hoping that you take my concern into great consideration.

Sincerely, Cynthia Martinez

<http://worldstemcellinstitute.org/asd-autism-fundraising/?gclid=COSR9eCpo8QCFdccgQoda5EAxw>